

December 5, 2008

REPORT

Seattle Public Utilities

Spanish-Language Focus Group Study Solid Waste Marketing Outreach

Conducted by:



Melissa Quezada, Principal
Quezada Consulting
20128 85th Avenue NE
Bothell, WA 98011
206.371.1594
Melissa@quezadaconsulting.com
www.quezadaconsulting.com

Focus Group 1 – Apartment Dwellers

Nov. 18, 2008, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

El Centro de la Raza

8 participants

I. Demographics

The majority of the participants currently live in apartments in the south Seattle area. All are Hispanic, with two people in the 20-29 age range, five in the 30-39 range, and two in the 40-49 range.

Six participants have a household income in the \$25,000-\$50,000 range, one under \$25,000, and one over \$50,000.

Three men and five women participated.

As a group, less than half are able to speak, read, and understand limited English. Two people are completely bilingual.

II. Initial Attitudes toward Service Changes

When asked what the first things they thought and felt about changes in SPU garbage, recycling, and food and yard waste collection services, the primary reaction was related to the cost. Most of the attendees have tight budgets and they are concerned about a high increase in the cost of their services. However, they also suspected that the changes may mean that SPU is expanding their recycling services and that this would be a positive change.

III. Ad Concept Testing

Bus Ads, Text Only – Listed most popular to least popular (note: all text was presented translated into Spanish)

Concept 1—Quieter trucks. More pickups. Recycle more paper, plastic, food & metal. Better recycling comes to Seattle March 30

This concept received the highest number of votes. The participants liked that it gives some information about what can be expected beginning March 30 but is still short and to the point.

Concept 2—Recycling. Reinvented. Better recycling comes to Seattle March 30.

Participants liked the feel of this one because it conveys a positive message, something to look forward to on March 30. It creates a feeling of curiosity about what it means and makes them want to learn more.

Concept 3—Recycling. A new day. A new way. Better recycling comes to Seattle March 30.

As with Concept 2, participants liked the feel of this one and considered it to be very positive. They prefer the shortness of “Recycling. Reinvented.” versus the language in Concept 3, but it still creates the feeling of curiosity about something new and positive coming to their services.

Concept 4—Better recycling is on the horizon. March 30- Recycling gets a remake.

Concept 5—Small is the new big....Better recycling comes to Seattle March 30.

Concepts 4 and 5 were tied for last place. Comments on Concept 4 included that it is too vague and does not even mention Seattle, so it is not clear who the changes are coming to or what they might be. On Concept 5, they thought it was equally vague. One person commented that it implies that only the dates will change but not the overall services provided.

Bus Ads - Visual

Participants were asked to identify their top three favorite ads in order of priority, with 1 being their top choice and 3 their last choice. The results are as follows, listed most popular to least popular.

Concept 1



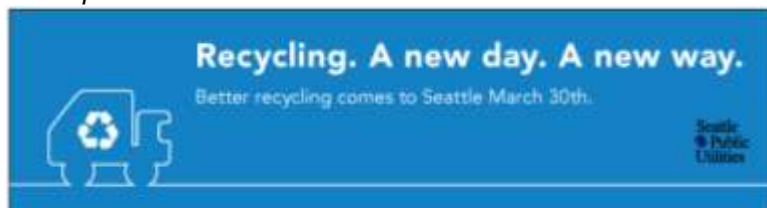
Three participants selected this as their top choice, three as their second choice, and two as their third. During the discussion, participants volunteered that they liked the visuals of the truck and the can with the accompanying short phrases that would be easy to read and understand as a bus passes by. They commented that it is friendly, pleasing to the eye, and informative, as well as teases the reader to learn more about what the changes might be.

Concept 6



Three participants selected this as their top choice, two as their second choice, and one as their third. Participants shared that they liked the real-life photos of items they might have in their house at any given time. They liked the bold lettering and said it really caught their attention, and had the same "teasing" effect as Concept 1.

Concept 5



One participant selected this ad as their top choice, one as their second choice, and one as their third choice. The person who selected it as their first choice said that the simplicity and bold headline are eye-

catching. Negative comments included that the drawing is too childlike and that it does not give much information. Most participants said that if it were on bus they would probably miss it entirely.

Concept 3



One person selected this as their top choice, one as their second choice, and one as their third. Those people really liked the graphics of the flowers and how the cans are used in an innovative way. They liked the green background, which to them goes with the recycling message (as opposed to the blue background in Concept 5). They also appreciated the simplicity of the headline. Participants commented that the secondary headline is difficult to see and could be easily missed.

Concept 10



One person selected this ad as their second choice and two as their third. They liked the green background better than the blue background in Concept 5, and said that it is very "friendly." Most participants, however, did not like the "childlike" graphic of the truck. Because most of them are not totally bilingual, text headlines are for the most part meaningless and they rely on images to convey the message. As this ad does not have realistic or meaningful images, it did not convey much to most of the participants.

Concept 4



One participant selected this as their third choice. This person liked the positive message that something better is coming, as well as the cleanness of the layout. They liked the picture as well, which they interpreted as the boy looking into the horizon for the better recycling that is coming. However, most participants did not understand the ad because of the language barrier. To them, this ad conveys next to nothing and is confusing ("Why is that boy holding cans up to his eyes?")

Concept 2



Concept 7



Concept 8



Concept 9



Concepts 2, 7, 8, and 9 received zero votes. For Concept 2, it was said that it is vague and not too interesting to the eye, and it doesn't call their attention. Concept 7 was fairly meaningless to those not fluent in English, and Concept 8 was confusing. Some said that it told them that their trash would actually get bigger rather than smaller and weren't sure what the small bag and large can are trying to convey. Concept 9 was called "boring," "uninteresting to the eye," and "dull." Most everyone said that if it were on a bus they would easily miss it, and again, the language barrier is an issue.

Radio Ads

All radio ad text was translated and read aloud to the participants. They were asked to rank the ads with 1 being their top choice and 3 being their last.

The 30: ad was the top choice with five votes. Comments included that they liked having all of the information included in the ad, such as the website address, and that it explains more about what is going to happen with the changes. Most people said that they would go to the website if they heard it on the radio because they understand that these changes will affect them and they want to make sure they understand.

The 20: ad received three votes and was the second choice. Those people said that it was short enough that they wouldn't change the station but still gave enough details to be informative, as well as the web address.

The 15: was the least popular. Most of the participants agreed that it was too short and conveys basically nothing. They said that if they heard it on the radio it would not register with them, and even if they did hear it there is no information about where to go to learn more.

IV. Notification Process

Participants stated that transit ads are good methods to announce changes that are coming, provided that the ads are placed on bus routes in their neighborhoods (south Seattle). Radio also received a favorable response; however, they suggested TV commercials on Seattle's Spanish-language station as the best way to get the word out. One participant recalled a segment on the Spanish-language news where SPU would be able to have a representative talk about the changes and inform the public on what exactly they can expect.

Another participant suggested Spanish-language information to be provided with the bill, or at least a note in Spanish saying that changes are coming and where they can go for more information in Spanish.

None of the participants regularly reads Seattle Spanish-language newspapers.

Other suggestions were to reach out to community centers, churches, and schools to communicate the changes. Many Spanish-speakers rely on their children to help them translate, and one suggestion was to educate children in the schools about recycling so that they can get excited about it and take the information to their homes. Others recalled a successful campaign to educate parents about proper installation and use of child car seats, and suggested that SPU conduct a similar campaign, more on a grassroots level where they are visible in the community.

V. Understanding What's Recyclable and Where it Goes

Where Does It Go?

In general, the participants liked this piece because of the real-life photos and because it was available in Spanish. They were also excited about the expanded services and were pleased that SPU is going to this measure, as it is better for the environment.

There was confusion, however, about certain items appearing in more than one category, such as glass, which appears in the recycling section in the form of bottles and jars and in the trash section as a glass vase. They did not understand why these items would be treated differently, as they are both glass.

They also noted that batteries appear in the trash section and on the back, but then one participant pointed out that the difference is that one is alkaline and one is rechargeable. They suggested pointing this out more clearly, such as on the trash side alkaline batteries could be listed with a note in parentheses (no rechargeable batteries) to make it more explicit, and vice versa.

There was particular excitement with regard to there being a service for used motor oil. Many of the participants change their own oil in their cars and find it difficult to dispose of the used motor oil.

What was not clear is whether the services listed on the back are part of SPU. At first, they were under the impression that everything on the piece is serviced by SPU, but then as they started reading it they realized that there are various phone numbers to call and other instructions. They suggested making this very clear, possibly by separating a section out that is headlined "Other Seattle Recycling Services" or something similar.

There was confusion about TVs appearing in two sections, as well as clothing, which appears in the trash section and on the back. They also didn't understand why wood leftover from construction couldn't be considered yard waste, since branches and the like are also wood.

Regarding the hazardous materials, they were unsure whether the containers needed to be empty and if they need to be rinsed out. They wondered if it would be ok if the bottle has a little of the product still inside. There was also a question about whether there is extra cost for this service.

One suggestion was to clearly state which services are new, because many people may not have understood recycling in Seattle in its current form, and so would not know the difference. The participant suggested a "Now Available!" or "New!" column within each section so that the differences would be clear.

When quizzed on whether they knew where specific items would go, the participants were mostly able to find the correct area. They were quizzed on deli trays, glass (which led to the discussion about the difference between glass jars and vases), plastic bags, cell phones, aluminum foil, food, and motor oil (which led to the discussion about whether there is an additional cost).

It was also suggested to list what people should do with used syringes.

VI. Building Manager/Owner Impact

All participants said that their apartment managers control the solid waste services available in their buildings. They were not aware that they might be able to raise the question of additional services with their managers. They said that if they were to go about it, they would start with talking to their neighbors (one participant owns a condo, and would work with her building association), learning from SPU what is available to them, and then going to the manager with their desires for expanded services.

VII. Food Waste

Suggested Improvements

- Create the “What’s New” section
- Listing a number for SPU where they can get help or suggestions on how to work with their apartment manager to use these services

Confusing Elements

- Does the shredded paper need to be in a bag or can it be loose? What type of bag is allowed?
- Why do paper bags appear here as well as in the recycling section?

VIII. Curb Waste & Conserve Newsletter

None of the participants could recall ever receiving the newsletter.

Most of the participants were unable to understand this piece due to the language barrier. Of those who could read it, at least partly, they liked the way the piece points out what is new, such as “Electronic Collection – New!” and “Used Motor Oil Collection – New!”

All participants agreed that if this piece were provided in Spanish, that they would read it. None of the participants has ever called for interpretation services. They said that if they received this piece, they would glance at it, and once they saw that it was in English, would probably throw it away. A few participants said that they might have their children translate it.

The bilingual participants said that overall this piece is clearer than the Where Does it Go? piece. The “Beyond the Curb” section clearly states that the items listed for recycling are not on the list of new services and that the piece is simply listing them for convenience for the user. They also really liked the tips section.

They did not have suggestions for improvement, other than to have the piece translated.

IX. Wrap-Up

Participants wanted to tell SPU that they appreciate the effort to reach out to them, and that they are open to learning about the new services and using them correctly, provided that they understand what they need to do. They are excited about what they learned during the meeting, and believe recycling to be very important to our environment.

They suggested that SPU begin notifying people about the coming changes early (the sooner the better) so that people can get used to the idea, beginning with simple ads and teasers. Then, as March 30th approaches, increase the amount of information provided and make sure it is clear what is new and what is currently available.

Focus Group 2 – Single Home

Nov. 25, 2008, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

El Centro de la Raza

9 participants

I. Demographics

The majority of the participants currently live a house in the south Seattle area. All are Hispanic, with two people in the 20-29 age range, four in the 30-39 range, one in the 40-49 range, and two over 60.

Four participants have a household income in the \$25,000-\$50,000 range, three under \$25,000, and two over \$50,000.

Three men and six women participated.

As a group, five are able to speak, read, and understand limited English, with four being solely Spanish speakers.

All of the participants currently recycle items such as newspaper, cardboard, and glass. All but one uses yard waste service, including adding leftover fruit, vegetables, and other food. Four people sometimes compost their leftovers.

II. Initial Attitudes toward Service Changes

When asked what the first things they thought and felt about changes in SPU garbage, recycling and food and yard waste collection services, the first reaction was that they assumed this meant that SPU is expanding their services in some way. They thought there might be more recycling options, or different containers coming, or possibly changes in their service days.

Two participants said that they hope the changes include services to dispose of hazardous materials.

They also hope that more educational information will be provided in Spanish because they know that many people in their communities throw everything away due to not understanding how to recycle.

They also assumed expanded changes would lead to increased cost, and there was some concern about how much.

III. Ad Concept Testing

Bus Ads, Text Only – Listed most popular to least popular (note: all text was presented translated into Spanish)

Concept 1—Quieter trucks. More pickups. Recycle more paper, plastic, food & metal. Better recycling comes to Seattle March 30

This concept received the highest number of votes (5 people selected it as their first choice). The participants liked that it hits on the four most important elements to them—the trucks, frequency, types of items impacted, and the date.

Concept 4—Better recycling is on the horizon. March 30- Recycling gets a remake.

Concept 4 received two first-place votes and several second-place votes, but was not one of the selected concepts for discussion.

Concept 3—Recycling. A new day. A new way. Better recycling comes to Seattle March 30.

Concept 3 was also popular, with one first-place vote and several second- and third-place votes. Participants liked the feel of this one and considered it to be a very positive message, something to look forward to on March 30. It also leaves them curious and wanting to know what will change.

Concept 2—Recycling. Reinvented. Better recycling comes to Seattle March 30.

Concept 2 received one first-place vote, but most participants marked it as their third or lower choice. The person who selected it liked the shortness of the headline and thought it was catchy and positive, with something good happening on March 30.

Concept 5—Small is the new big....Better recycling comes to Seattle March 30.

Concept 5 was marked as most people's fourth or fifth choice, with one person selecting it as their second choice. The participants said it implies that recycling is going to improve simply because of changes in their collection days, and wondered why this would be considered an improvement.

Bus Ads - Visual

Participants were asked to identify their top three favorite ads in order of priority, with 1 being their top choice and 3 their last choice. The results are as follows, listed most popular to least popular.

Concept 1



Four participants selected this as their top choice, three as their second choice, and two as their third. During the discussion, participants volunteered that they liked the visuals of the truck and the can with the accompanying short phrases that would be easy to read and understand as a bus passes by. They commented that it is friendly, pleasing to the eye, and informative, as well as teases the reader to learn more about what the changes might be. They also thought it would be understood by non English-speakers due to the graphics.

Concept 6



Three participants selected this as their top choice, two as their second choice, and one as their third. Participants shared that they liked the real-life photos of items they might have in their house at any given

time. They liked the bold lettering and said it really caught their attention, and is a good teaser as to what's coming. They also thought non English-speakers would be able to understand the message.

Concept 8



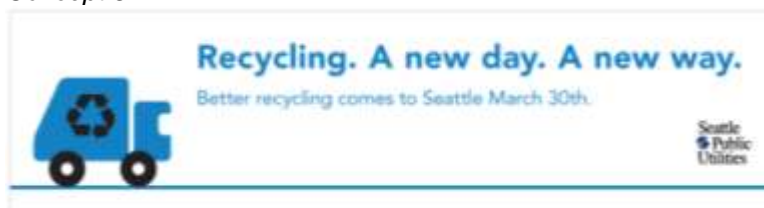
Two participants selected this ad as their top choice, two as their second choice, and three as their third choice. The people who selected it as their first choice said that the simplicity and bold headline are eye-catching. Negative comments included that the drawing is too childlike and that it does not give much information. The people who liked it thought it would be a good one to use if there were to be a campaign educating children. However, one person (who did not select it), did not think it would be good for children. She works with children and says that to teach them properly, real-life photos should be used.

Concept 9

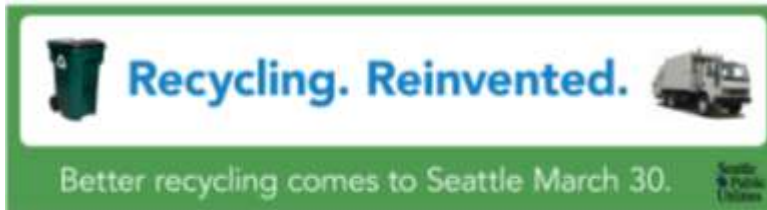


One participant selected this ad as their second choice, and three as their third. Comments included that they like the Seattle skyline and visuals of the truck and can, and that with these three elements it communicates without words that something is happening to Seattle recycling services. They also like the positive message about services getting even better.

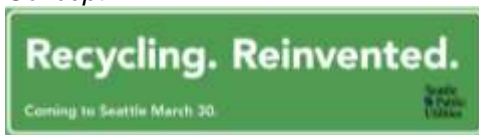
Concept 5



Four participants selected this ad as their third choice. Comments included they liked its simplicity and positive message. Most participants did not like the "cartoon-like" graphic, however, and thought it would not communicate much to Spanish speakers.

Concept 3

One person rated this ad as their third choice. That person liked the simple, bold headline and the photos of the truck and can, and thought it would mean something to Spanish speakers.

Concept 3*Concept 4**Concept 7*

Concepts 3, 4, and 7 received zero votes. They did not like the use of cans as flowers in Concept 3 and did not see the connection with changes in their service. One participant didn't even see that they are cans, but thought they were electronic parts. They thought Concept 4 was "odd" and thought it had more of a "big brother," "we're watching you," kind of effect. They did not like the plainness of Concept 7 and did not think it would communicate anything to Spanish speakers.

Radio Ads

All radio ad text was translated and read aloud to the participants. They were asked to rank the ads with 1 being their top choice and 3 being their last.

The 30: received five votes for first place. Comments included that it is informative and gives the website address so they can learn more.

A close second with four votes for first place, the 20: ad was popular because it is not too short or too long, and still gives good information and the web address. One person also commented that she liked the term "Discover the new way..." because it made it seem like something new and exciting for people to learn about.

The 15: ad was too short and fast for most people to absorb any information.

IV. Notification Process

Radio and TV ads are considered by far to be the best method. One participant recalled a jingle created for a seatbelt campaign, and said that something similar would be good, combined with a high level of frequency.

Another participant suggested Spanish billboards in their neighborhoods.

Someone else suggested handing out or mailing objects with information on them that people would keep, such as magnets or reusable grocery bags.

Other suggestions were to reach out to community centers, churches, and schools to communicate the changes. Many Spanish-speakers rely on their children to help them translate, and one suggestion was to educate children in the schools about recycling so that they can get excited about it and take the information to their homes. Others recalled the very successful campaign to educate parents about proper installation and use of child car seats, and suggested that SPU conduct a similar campaign, more on a grassroots level where they are visible in the community.

Two participants also suggested TV commercials on Seattle's Spanish-language station as the best way to get the word out, and mentioned the segment (mentioned in the previous group) on the Spanish-language news where SPU would be able to have a representative talk about the changes and inform the public on what exactly they can expect.

Another suggestion was to have SPU representatives (and people from their communities who have been educated) at farmer's markets in their neighborhood explaining the changes.

One person suggested labels on each can to indicate what goes where. That person also suggested placing recycling containers with labels in city parks.

V. Understanding of Service Changes

Curb Waste & Conserve Newsletter

Most participants were able to recall seeing this newsletter before.

The participants who could not read English did not understand anything that this piece has to offer.

One person suggested that if someone calls the interpretation number listed on the piece, that they should then get flagged and put on a mailing list to receive future mailings in Spanish. Also, when people move or set up their service for the first time, they should be asked in what language they would like to receive information.

Another person wondered how much in advance of March 30 would this newsletter arrive, and if it is part of a larger campaign. As a standalone piece, he thought it was confusing and that it would lead to people making errors in their recycling.

Another participant commented that it has a lot of information, possibly too much, and that people might not read it all and process it. She suggested newsletters that focus on just one topic and are much shorter, but arrive more frequently.

Collection Calendar

Changes that they gathered from this piece include increased frequency in pick-up and that food and yard wastes are combined.

It is unclear how many containers residents will end up with.

A question arose as to whether anything special needs to be done with broken glass, or can it be placed in the container as is. Also, is colored glass allowed?

The Spanish-only participants stated that this piece communicates well using real-life photos and that they are able to understand what items go where.

The participants liked the list of other suggestions of ways to dispose of items, particularly larger items such as furniture.

Participants were able to correctly answer that food and yard waste will be collected weekly, were able to correctly identify their new collection day, and recycling day. However, those who do not read English were unable to do find their new days.

Suggested improvements:

- Have “yes” and “no” lists in each section so that it is very clear what is allowed and what isn’t
- Make new changes obvious in some way using highlighting or a “what’s new” section that uses photos
- Under “Other Collection Services,” state how often this collection will occur, or if it is only when a person calls for the service

VI. Understanding What’s Recyclable and Where it Goes

Where Does It Go?

When quizzed, participants were able to correctly find where items such as deli trays, paper plates, napkins, and utensils should go.

One person noted that the footer on the Recycling section states that recyclables should be clean, dry, and unbagged. However, the listing of items states that plastic bags should be bagged and this seems to conflict, because after all recyclable bags fall under the category of having to be clean, dry, and unbagged.

There was confusion regarding the distinction between recyclable glass objects and “unusable ceramics and glass” in the Garbage section. They did not understand the difference between these glass objects and those that are recyclable. They suggest having some clarification on what exactly deems a glass object “unusable.”

One participant raised the question of what to do with plastic bottles from cleaning products. She saw that plastic bottles are listed in the recycling section, but the photos are of plastic bottles that contained food. Cleaning products are not listed in the garbage section, either, so participants were unclear as to what to do with empty plastic bottles that contained daily household cleaners such as window cleaner, dish soap, detergent, and bleach.

The hazardous materials section raised the question of whether the containers need to be entirely empty and rinsed. Participants also wondered what will happen once these items are taken away—are they dumped, recycled, or what?

Several participants also wondered what to do with syringes.

Compared to the collection calendar piece, the participants liked that this piece because it is on one page and it’s simpler. They thought the phone numbers of where to call were more obvious and easy to find on the Where Does It Go? piece. However, they definitely like the calendar portion of the other piece (note: participants are concerned that their service will be spread out on different days and prefer for all the collections to happen on the same day of the week).

One participant wanted to know where rubber items such as old shoes and tires would be disposed of.

VII. Food and Yard Waste

Participants understand that this service is expanding and that by moving many of the items that would normally go in their garbage to this receptacle, they can reduce the size of their garbage bin.

When asked if they will use this service or what they will do different, participants said that they definitely plan to use it and are excited about the ability to recycle their food waste in particular.

There is concern about health hazards related to rotting food and having the bin attract bugs or pests.

Preferred terms for food and yard waste are:

- Abono – compost
- Restos de alimento – food waste
- Desperdicio – food waste
- Sobrantes – leftovers

One participant made a suggestion that can be used as a “tip” in a future newsletter: Before you begin cooking a meal, place a container on the counter where you can discard food (fruit and vegetable peels, eggshells, bones, etc.) as you cook, then empty the container in your food waste bin when done.

VIII. Rates

At first glance, participants thought their rates were increasing a lot, but after further evaluation, they estimated that by changing their recycling habits, they could keep their costs down. Further, they understood that they are getting more for their money with the increased frequency in pick-ups.

When asked if they will change their level of service, participants said that they most likely would. One person noted that she would change the sizes of her bins given the new services.

Suggested improvements:

- Emphasize that even though rates are increasing, by recycling more, people can cut their costs because they will require a smaller trash receptacle

IX. Attitudes Toward Service Changes Now

When asked to revisit the transit ads and whether their opinion had changed, most participants had not changed their minds. One person changed her mind from Concept 6 to Concept 1, because now that she understood how the service is going to change, she thought the truck and can were important to have on the ad.

Participants were asked what the most important things they learned are. One person commented that she learned that recycling services were about to improve and that she would have more options for recycling food. She also learned that the size and number of her bins would change.

Another participant took away from the meeting that recycling would now be easier.

To another participant, the most important thing he learned is that the frequency of the pick-ups will increase.

IX. Wrap-Up

Participants want to tell SPU that they appreciate the effort to reach out to them and ask for their opinions. They are also very happy that Seattle is doing its part to improve the environment. They are excited about what they learned during the meeting and are ready to implement it.

Overall suggestions:

- Increase frequency of pick-up for food waste, particularly in the summer
- Provide smaller bins for inside people's homes for recycle and food waste
- Offer subsidy programs to low-income residents and seniors
- Explore methods to identify Spanish-only households so that SPU can provide mailings in Spanish when needed

Overall concerns:

- Health hazards related to rotting food that is waiting for pick-up
- Participants are concerned with the durability of the new containers and security of the lids